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INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS PRIORITY
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 0019
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 5132
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON PRIORITY 1965
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY 3880
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 7924
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BANGKOK 005740

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DEPT FOR EAP/MLS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [TH](#)
SUBJECT: THAI ELECTION CANDIDATE REGISTRATION BEGINS WITH
FANFARE

REF: A. BANGKOK 5667 (CAMPAIGN RULES EASED)

- [1](#)B. BANGKOK 5600 (MILITARY ELECTION INTERFERENCE)
- [1](#)C. BANGKOK 5578 (THAI ELECTION SEASON)
- [1](#)D. BANGKOK 5482 (ELECTION DECREE ADVANCES)

SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (SBU) Registration for 80 party lists seats to be contested in the December 23 general elections began on November 7, with 18 political parties and several dozen candidates registering with the Election Commission of Thailand (ECT). Political party leaders speculated on the superstitious implications of an ECT drawing that determines the numerical placement of parties on the ballot. The ECT cautioned political parties against violating the commission's strict campaign regulations, while an ECT investigative committee considered the legitimacy of accusations that the military plotted to impede the prospects of the pro-Thaksin People's Power Party in the elections. End summary.

PARTY LIST REGISTRATION BEGINS

[1](#)2. (U) 18 Thai political parties and party list candidates registered with the Election Commission of Thailand (ECT) on November 7 to contest 80 party list parliamentary seats in the December 23 general election. According to the new constitution, voters in each of eight geographic constituencies will elect 10 party representatives to fill a total of 80 proportional party list seats in the 480-member House of Representatives. Political parties have until November 11 to register to compete for these party list seats. Seven of the largest parties registered to compete in all eight constituencies, while the remaining parties fielded candidates in only one to four constituencies. Some political party leaders, many of them registered as candidates themselves, organized campaign events prior to and following their registration with the ECT.

[1](#)3. (SBU) On November 7, the ECT also drew lots to determine the numerical placement of each registered party on the party list ballot. The process attracted more attention than might

be expected, largely due to the implication of some numbers in Thai and Chinese numerology. The Democrat Party tried to make the best out of drawing the "unlucky" number (four) which it had also drawn in a previous election, saying it could now reuse old election posters to save money. The leader of the Pracharaj party reportedly welcomed his drawing of the "lucky" number nine as a "good omen." Chart Thai leader Banharn Silpa-archa was visibly unhappy over drawing number 13.

DODGING CAMPAIGN REGULATION LANDMINES

¶4. (SBU) As an indication of the inflexibility of many of the ECT's strict election campaign rules (refs A and C), on November 5 ECT Secretary-General Suthipong Thaweechaikarn publicly warned candidates against "shouting for joy" should they be pleased with their party's lot drawing. Suthipong claimed such an exclamation may be considered "entertainment," a restricted activity under campaign rules. (Rules were loosened to permit the traditional musicians to accompany the registration parade, however, and several parties were accompanied by dragon dancers or long-drum performers on he way to register.) The ECT Deputy Secretary-General also threatened candidates with criminal

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charges should constitutionally unqualified individuals file their candidacy with the ECT. (Note: The new constitution specifies several age, nationality, and education-related requirements for members of parliament. End note.) The ECT said it would review all candidate registrations to ensure candidates were legally qualified to contest the elections.

¶5. (U) On November 6, the ECT announced it could not approve the selection of Prachai LiwPAIRAT as the leader of the

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Matchima Thippatai party since Prachai's selection had not been undertaken by secret ballot as called for under the law.

ECT Chairman Apichart Sukhagganond advised the Matchima Thippatai party to refrain from breaking campaign rules by publicly identifying Prachai as the leader of the organization until the ECT approved his selection as party leader.

INVESTIGATION OF CAMPAIGN VIOLATION BEGINS

¶6. (SBU) The head of an ECT investigative committee formed to investigate October 23 accusations by pro-Thaksin People's Power Party (PPP) leader Samak Sundaravej that the Council for National Security (CNS) plotted to impede his party's election prospects announced it expected to complete its investigation prior to the December 23 elections. The committee said it would consider the legitimacy of allegedly leaked RTG documents that purportedly prove the CNS planned to use the military to limit voter support for the PPP (reftel B), and would recommend punitive actions should the documents be proven to be legitimate.

BOYCE